

CALFED Bay-Delta Program: *Ecosystem Restoration Program*

Public/Stakeholder Update
July 23, 1999 Issue 1

Inside this Issue...

History of the
Upper Yuba River
Studies Program

1

CALFED
Decision-Making
Process

2

Workgroup
Recommendations

3

Key Issues
and Concerns

4

Upcoming
Public
Meetings

8

CALFED Bay-Delta Program

1416 Ninth Street, Room 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916.657.2666
Fax: 916.657.9780
<http://calfed.ca.gov>

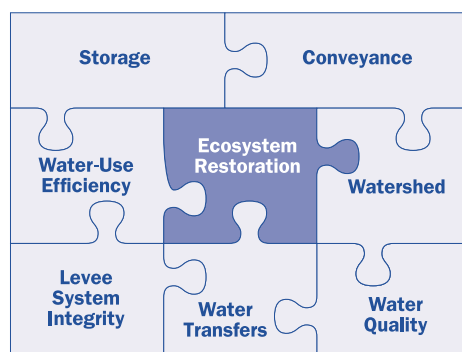
Upper Yuba River Studies Program

For decades, how much water to take from the system and when, protecting endangered species, maintaining water quality and protecting those who live and work in the Delta itself were stumbling blocks to fixing problems as they arose.

With little agreement and a lot of gridlock, over the years the Bay-Delta system has declined. There is no one single cause of decline, but many actions over a long period have led to conflict over how to both use and restore the Bay-Delta. CALFED was created to address these issues and has identified four primary problem areas:

- *Declining habitats and some native species listed as endangered*
- *Impaired water quality*
- *Reduced water supply reliability*
- *Weakened Delta levees pose a high risk of failure*

In December 1998 CALFED released a framework for the draft preferred alternative. The draft preferred program alternative consists of eight strategies for solving each of the four Bay-Delta problem areas in an integrated manner.



History of the Upper Yuba Rivers Studies Program

The objective of CALFED's Ecosystem Restoration Program is to develop comprehensive plans to restore ecological processes, habitats, and species on rivers and tributaries to the Bay-Delta. The Upper Yuba River studies will examine the feasibility of introducing anadromous fish species, primarily spring-run chinook salmon and steelhead trout, to the Upper Yuba River.

Spring-run chinook salmon have

declined throughout the Central Valley and are listed as a threatened species under the State Endangered Species Act. Likewise, steelhead trout population declines led to their listing as a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Steelhead and spring-run chinook salmon require cool streams found in headwater areas high in the watershed, and the Upper Yuba historically had steelhead and spring-run chinook runs. In 1998, the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan recommended a study plan to determine if returning steelhead and spring-run to the river was feasible by changing Englebright Dam (*Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan, March 1999*).

At a December 9, 1998, meeting held in Olivehurst, California, the public made it clear to CALFED staff that the programmatic action described had misstated CALFED's intent. Subsequently, the plan was revised to emphasize the restoration of the steelhead and spring-run salmon and various options to achieve that end.

Because public participation is an essential part of the program, CALFED contacted involved stakeholders to obtain recommendations for small (10-12 individuals) stakeholder groups to assist in developing study issues for the Upper Yuba River watershed. CALFED convened three small workgroups representing property and business owners, water supply and power, environmental interests, and State and Federal resource agencies. The Upper Yuba River Workgroup has developed a set of issues and recommended feasibility studies to help guide a comprehensive decision-making process.

The mission of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program

To develop a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system.

CALFED Decision-Making Process

CALFED wants to make a timely decision regarding the feasibility of introducing chinook salmon and steelhead to the Upper Yuba River watershed. This decision must be based on credible scientific evidence with full consideration of potential adverse or beneficial environmental, biological, and socio-economic effects.

CALFED has required a collaborative effort among competing interests in this issue to provide balance, communication, and education. Serious issues exist regarding the quality of upstream habitat, mercury contamination of the environment, the role of Englebright Dam in flood control for the Yuba-Sutter area, power generation, water supply reliability, recreation, and business and property values.

Achieving a Balance

An innovative, open process will be used to address the issues and concerns voiced at the public meetings in Olivehurst and Penn Valley in December 1998 and January 1999.

The public's issues and concerns have been reevaluated and refined by the Upper Yuba River Studies Workgroup. Although the accomplishments of this Workgroup have been impressive, we must ensure that all voices are heard. The Workgroup would like to hear your opinions and have scheduled five public workshops during August 1999.

Upcoming Public Meetings (see back page for details)

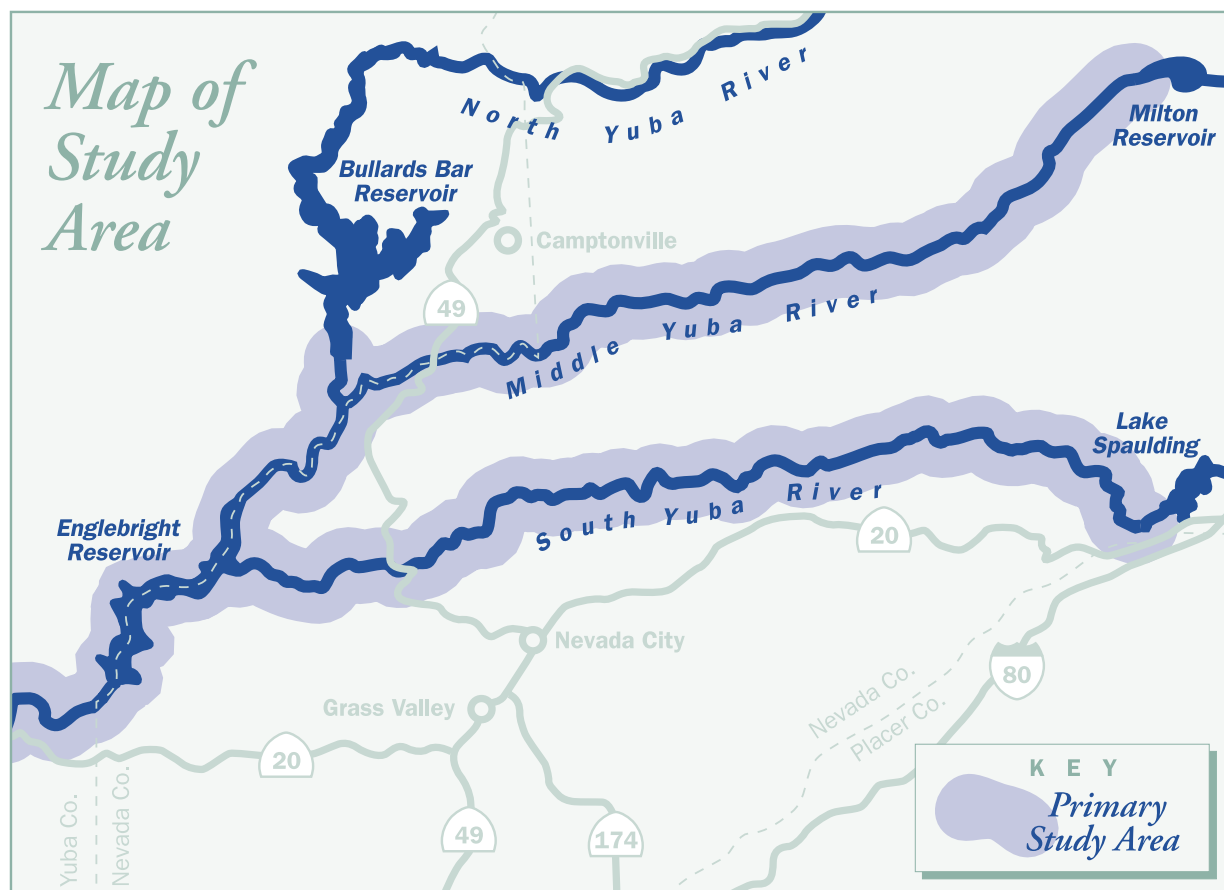
August 4, 1999 *Auburn*

August 5, 1999 *Nevada City*

August 10, 1999 *Olivehurst*

August 11, 1999 *Oakland*

August 12, 1999 *Yuba City*



Workgroup Recommendations

Introduction

On June 18, 1999, the lake, river, and agency stakeholder groups met together in Grass Valley, California. The primary goal of the meeting was to reach agreement on the Upper Yuba River study's purpose, its phases, definition of the study area, the process, and the specific parameters for each key issue area identified in the stakeholder groups. The following is a summary of the major agreements reached during the Workgroup meeting.

MAJOR AGREEMENTS

Purpose Statement

To determine if introduction of wild chinook salmon and steelhead to the Upper Yuba River watershed is biologically, environmentally, and socio-economically feasible over the long term.

Study Phases

Phase 1 - Stakeholder Workgroups

- Purpose: Develop a list of study recommendations from which technical experts will develop feasibility study scopes of work
- Completion date: September 1995

Phase 2 - Feasibility Study

- Purpose: Complete feasibility studies for priority issues identified by the Upper Yuba River Workgroup
- Completed within 18 months

Phase 3 - Study Analysis

- Purpose: Evaluate the results of

analyses and have the combined stakeholder group make recommendation on next step(s)

- Estimated completion within six months of completion of Phase 2

Study Area

Definition

- On the South Yuba River to Lake Spaulding
- On the Middle Yuba River to Milton Reservoir
- On the North Yuba River to New Bullards Bar Reservoir
- See map on page 2

Additional Comment

- It is important to have flexible study area boundaries to accommodate individual issue areas as they are analyzed
- In order to capture the water supply effects, the study area will include the watershed above each of the three upper reservoirs, the Bear River, American River, and Auburn Ravine drainages

- Both natural and human-made barriers up to the upper reservoirs should be assessed
- Tributary analyses, defined by the technical experts, are necessary to determine the overall scope of potential fish habitat

Defining Feasibility

- The workgroup will need to evaluate/define feasibility (criteria) for each issue area
- This issue will be revisited by the workgroup during the development of the scopes of work
- Each study should satisfy the following broad criteria:
 - Meets the purpose statement
 - Complete
 - Credible
 - Flexible
 - Practical
 - Incremental
 - Satisfies any basic cost/benefit analysis
- Complete a search of available information on the Yuba River

Study Process

- The process should be defined as a threshold feasibility study since no proposed project or action exists at this time
- NEPA/CEQA processes should be addressed later, if necessary
- Evaluate all issue areas in the context of these options:
 - Stand Alone Options
 - A no action alternative
 - Decommissioning
 - New or alternate channels
 - Dry dam
 - Options in Combination with Others
 - Lowering the dam
 - Fish ladder

Continued

Workgroup Recommendations

Continued

ISSUE AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal in identifying key concerns and evaluation factors is to develop scopes of work with as much specificity as possible. In some cases, technical experts will be relied upon to provide more detail or propose study methodologies/approaches (i.e., economics, tributary analyses, etc.). The group recognized that many of the issues in the summary need clarification and technical review by study experts during the writing of technical scopes for Request for Proposals. The following six issues areas were discussed.

Upstream Habitat

Level of Detail

- Study should:
 - Focus on steelhead and spring-run chinook
 - Examine upstream tributaries in addition to main forks
 - Examine flow requirements for fall-run and spring-run chinook and steelhead
- Use several different investigative methodologies to provide credibility

Factors for Habitat Evaluation

- Potential restorable habitat including an analysis of:
 - Amount of existing and potential fishery habitat
 - Inventory of current spawning and spring-run holding habitat
 - Potential passage problems at Log

Cabin and Our House Dams for downstream migrating fish
- Structural (human-made and natural) and operational barriers

- Spawning gravel size distribution and permeability
- Evaluate river flows and water quality as it pertains to maintaining fisheries in the Upper Yuba River
- Examine upstream reservoir operations regarding:
 - seasonal and daily water temperature data for the Yuba River watershed
 - releases required to maintain proposed fisheries
- Comparison of current, historic, and potential river flows
- Determine overall water quality
- Forest management practices and how they relate to water quality

Fisheries Evaluation

- Existing aquatic environment on/in lake to determine potential effects on resident fish populations
- Abundance and distribution of Upper Yuba fish
- Potential predation of currently segregated species (e.g. young salmon and resident fish species in Englebright Lake)
- Spawning cycles and lifestages in Upper Yuba River

Other Factors for Evaluation

- The effects of upstream recreation, mining, logging, development, and other activities on endangered species
- Volumes and types of sediment currently transported in the upper river

Additional Comments

- Look at Yuba as a system — evaluate potential benefits resulting from the segregation of spring-run chinook and fall-run chinook

Key Issues and Concerns

- **Upstream Habitat for Salmon and Steelhead:** Field investigations are necessary to determine if habitat and fish passage conditions above Englebright Dam are suitable for spring-run chinook salmon and steelhead trout.
- **Condition of Habitat Downstream of Englebright Dam:** Fish habitat conditions below Englebright Dam contribute to maintaining healthy populations of fall-run chinook salmon and other anadromous fish.
- **Public Health and Safety (Flood Control):** Programs that maintain or increase flood protection while improving environmental conditions are favored.
- **Economic Effects:** The potential adverse and beneficial economic results need to be evaluated. These include property values, business values, power generation, recreation.
- **Sediment Control and Water Quality:** The quantity of sediment captured by Englebright Dam needs to be accurately determined. The presence or absence of contaminants such as mercury in the sediments needs to be analyzed.
- **Water Supply Effects:** Water management in the system needs to be analyzed to determine if ecological improvements can be obtained without compromising or providing water supplies.

Downstream Habitat

Evaluation Factors

- Effect on downstream habitat resulting from upstream habitat activities
- Water temperature
- Water flows
- Substrate condition
- Sediment transport from the upper river to the lower river and its effect on habitat, including riparian habitat
- Mercury and other heavy metal contamination
- Effects of streambed armoring due to interception of gravel flow by dam

Public Health and Safety (Flood Control)

Evaluation Factors

- Sediment releases — effects of both sudden and ongoing
- Consider dredging, especially with dry dam
- Consider removal of sediment before it goes down the river
- Effects of steelhead listing on dredging
- Effects on hydraulic capacity and flood management
- Flood implications of re-operation
- Restore ecosystem and provide improved flood protection
- Quantify flood control and fire fighting contribution
- Consider improved floodplain interceptions
- Levee setbacks

Additional Comments

- US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) must be an integral player in this issue area

- People and property first, then ecosystem is restored
- Work with USACE and Yuba County Water Agency on existing flood control studies/programs
- Not acceptable to increase flood dangers downstream
- Sutter and Yuba Counties need to be left whole in terms of flood control

Economics

Evaluation Factors

- Establish a baseline from which economic benefits or losses can be measured
- Effects on property, business, hydro-electric, water supply, and water storage (loss of water upstream) values
- Effects on local government tax revenues (sales tax and property tax)
- Set economic thresholds for each option
- Compare negative local impacts with potential positive benefits elsewhere
- Detail economic value of sediment

Additional Comments

- “Grandfather Clause” (CALFED endangered species assurances) for Endangered Species Act is an important issue for local property and business owners
- Consider economic benefits of altering the existing environment
- Set guidelines
 - How to define scope of economic analysis
 - Use other examples
 - Regulatory compliance liability
- Economic effect of not restoring fish is important to feasibility
- Have economist determine the appropriate brackets or parameters to assess impacts

- Balance analysis among each option
- Should show impacts and benefits
- Nevada County expressed concerns in four main areas: baseline property values; economic analysis of negative and positive effects; the true cost of restoring the fisheries; and including regional, statewide, and local effects in the analysis
- Yuba County expressed additional concerns about the Lower Yuba River values without Englebright Dam

Sediment Control & Water Quality Effects

Evaluation Factors

- Rate of change in bio-accumulation of mercury
- Characterize sediment
- Factors affecting sediment transport
- Understand chemical composition and volume
- Examine factors affecting mercury methylation
- Determine mercury and sediment inflow rates and sources in main-stream and tributaries
- Determine if toxins have entered the food chain, and the extent of risk of increased rate of absorption
- Determine effects of sediment downstream due to removal of reservoir or changes in operations
- Identify removal techniques, cost, and potential disposal sites
- Review other literature and agencies’ information on mercury and silt accumulation
- Put the USGS in the lead for the study evaluation

Continued

Workgroup Recommendations

Continued

Water Supply Effects

Clarify Upper Yuba River Watershed's role (above Spaulding and Jackson Meadows) to its headwaters in supplying water for the region

- Identify specific water supply effects, in terms of water quantity and flow pattern
- Study effects in full range of water year types
- Identify water needs of new fisheries
- Identify impacts of water diversion to other watersheds (i.e., Bear and American Rivers)
- Consider effect of agricultural water shortages on rural character and economy of the region
- Identify system improvements/replacements/supplies/mitigation
- Conduct a water rights assessment
- Review general plans/growth constraints
- Effects on Pacific Gas & Electric,

Nevada Irrigation District, and Yuba County Water Agency power supplies and demand

- Effects on groundwater users
- Water purveyors need to be left whole in terms of water supply

Process: Proposed Consultant, Other Agencies, or Other Entities' Evaluation

Agreements

- Each of the three workgroups will identify two representatives to the evaluation committee. This committee will:
 - *Prepare and review RFP (Request for Proposals) and technical scopes*
 - *Provide input and recommendations on consultant qualifications*
- CALFED stated they would prefer to work over the length of the study process with one larger combined stakeholder group. However, each workgroup will be encouraged to continue to meet, maintain autonomy,

discuss issues, and develop suggested solutions to be considered by the combined workgroup

- Once the technical experts have been selected, the larger stakeholder group will initiate scoping process to clarify key issues
- The combined larger stakeholder group will provide an ongoing advisory role for technical analyses and be briefed at the milestones

Process: Public Meeting Discussion

Agreements

- Each of the stakeholder groups will identify two representatives to participate in the preparation and presentation of the public meeting
- There was some discussion on a broader public outreach program which might include:
 - *Multi-media presentation*
 - *Periodic public meetings*
 - *Interactive web site*
 - *Document or regular newsletter*
- The group agreed that a broader public outreach program was necessary and would like CALFED to provide funding

Where to Find Information on the Upper Yuba River Studies Program

Program website

<http://calfed.ca.gov>
(select *Programs*, then select *Environmental Restoration Program*)

Toll-free public information telephone line

1-800-700-5752

CalFed News, EcoUpdate, and factsheets

available from: CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Attn: Upper Yuba River Studies Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814
phone: 916-657-2666

Process: Conflict Resolution Process Among Group Members

Agreements

- Use a process for resolving conflicts within the group or between individual members of the group as the process moves forward. The successive steps are:
 - *Direct one-on-one resolution is preferred*
 - *Involvement of neutral facilitator/mediator*
 - *Decision escalates to group or higher authority*
 - *Change representation or process*

Upper Yuba River Studies Workgroup

Representatives and Alternates

Curt Aikens

Yuba County Water Agency

Dick Akin

Sutter County Board of Supervisors

Charlie Alpers

U.S. Geological Survey

Allison Bettencourt

*Natural Resources Conservation Service,
Nevada County Resource Conservation
District*

Tom Borden

*Citizens Allied Against Lake Englebright
Destruction*

Rance Broda

Gold Country Flyfishers

Larry Brown

U.S. Geological Survey

Jen Carville

Friends of the River

Henry DeLamur

Yuba Sutter Flood Control Committee

Neil Dubrovsky

U.S. Geological Survey

Allan Eberhart

Sierra Club

Steve Edmondson

National Marine Fisheries Service

Jim Eicher

Bureau of Land Management

Steve Evans

Friends of the River

Tim Feller

*Citizens Allied Against Lake Englebright
Destruction*

Mike Fitzwater

California Sportfishing Protection Alliance

Shawn Garvey

South Yuba River Citizens League

Kevin Goishi

Pacific Gas & Electric

Mary Grim

Tahoe National Forest

Doug Grothe

US Army Corp of Engineers

Karl Halupka

National Marine Fisheries Service

Brent Haste

Yuba County Water Agency

Bruce Herring

South Yuba River Citizens League

Joe Holmberg

US Army Corp of Engineers

Doni Hubbard

*Citizens Allied Against Lake Englebright
Destruction*

Mary Keller

Sutter County

George Leipzig

Penn Valley Chamber of Commerce

Dan Logue

Yuba Sutter Flood Control Committee

Einer Maisch

Placer County Water Agency

Elizabeth Martin

Nevada County Board of Supervisors

Carl Mesick

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Terry Mills

CALFED Bay-Delta Program

Bill Mitchell

Yuba County Water Agency

Dave Munro

Skipper's Cove Marina

John Nelson

California Department of Fish and Game

Les Nicholson

Nevada Irrigation District

Ray Patton

*California Department of Parks and
Recreation*

Steve Peirano

Pacific Gas & Electric

John Regan

South Yuba River Citizens League

Marc Reisner

*Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's
Associations*

Barbara Rivenes

Sierra Club

Larry Sanders

South Yuba River Citizens League

Craig Seltenrich

Pacific Gas & Electric

Carol Smith

Tahoe National Forest

Hal Stocker

Yuba County Board of Supervisors

Kerri Timmer

Yuba Watershed Council

Mal Toy

Placer County Water Agency

Steve Trafton

Trout Unlimited

Ron Trunk

Julie Tupper

U.S. Forest Service

Cara Wasilewski

South Yuba River Citizens League

Mike Winter

Lake Wildwood Association

David Yardas

Environmental Defense Fund



*Yes, please add me to the
Upper Yuba Studies Program
mailing list to receive
information and advance
notification of upcoming
public meetings.*

Name _____

Address _____

City/Zip _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

E-mail _____

Clip this form and mail it to:
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Upper Yuba River Studies Program
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

CALFED Bay-Delta Program

1416 Ninth Street, Room 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916.657.2666

Fax: 916.657.9780

<http://calfed.ca.gov>

Upcoming Public Meetings

Meeting Format

7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Workgroup Presentations

8 p.m. to 9 p.m. Structured Questions and Comments using Written Cards

9 p.m. to 10 p.m. Informal One-on-One with Workgroup Members

August 4, 1999, 7:00 p.m.

Auburn
Gold Country Fairgrounds, Sierra Building
High Street and Auburn-Folsom Road

Auburn

August 5, 1999, 7:00 p.m.

Grass Valley
The Miners Foundry
325 Spring Street

Nevada City

August 10, 1999, 7:00 p.m.

Olivehurst
Olivehurst Community Center
4979 Olivehurst Avenue, Youth Center Drive

Olivehurst

August 11, 1999, 7:00 p.m.

Oakland
The Edward R. Roybal Auditorium and Conference Center
1301 Clay Street, Room 280N

Oakland

August 12, 1999, 7:00 p.m.

Yuba City
Yuba-Sutter Fair, Franklin Hall
442 Franklin Avenue

Yuba City

Upper Yuba River Studies Program